Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2016
Supplement No. 24

E/2016/44-E/C.16/2016/8

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the fifteenth session (18-22 April 2016)

United Nations • New York, 2016

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

ISSN 1728-0036

Summary

The present report contains the main findings and recommendations of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its fifteenth session. The Committee addressed the issue of transforming public institutions to facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on moving from commitments to results. Given the pivotal role of Governments when it came to implementation of all the Goals, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels were a sine qua non for making progress.

The Committee emphasized that policy integration required going beyond separate, sectoral policymaking and warranted action based on horizontal interconnection between sectors and on vertical linkages of action among various levels of government. It was important to take an inclusive and participatory approach to problem-solving, decision-making and resource allocation, which had implications for the way in which public administrations and public servants worked. Local authorities would play a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries should therefore enhance efforts to promote policy integration between levels of government and develop more robust national frameworks for sharing responsibilities and resources in pursuit of common objectives.

Similarly, the Committee noted that there was a need for government to put a strong emphasis on improving engagement and communication with people and enhancing the responsiveness of institutions. The Sustainable Development Goals called for high levels of communication and engagement among stakeholders. A comprehensive understanding of needs, priorities and capacities was needed in taking stock of what that would entail and to strengthen efforts to ensure that no one was left behind. Open government and information and communications technology could be valuable enablers in that respect and could help countries to move from a State-centric model of governance to one that focused on people and established a new relationship between public administration and society.

The Committee stressed that, when properly managed and integrated, diversity and action against all forms of discrimination could play an important part in positioning the public sector as a true driver of change, development and performance. It was essential to ensure that diversity and non-discrimination were understood as assets and not threats, and as sources of renewal for public policies in service to development, social cohesion and peace. The issue must be dealt with in its entirety with a balanced and comprehensive approach rather than through piecemeal measures. In promoting diversity, non-discrimination and related community-driven development efforts, it was essential that vulnerable groups not be overlooked.

The Committee emphasized that parliament was the principal oversight institution in modern democracies, with authority both over public policies and over government administration. The judiciary was another essential mechanism for oversight. Additional efforts were needed to ensure that both parliament and the judiciary had the capacity and training needed to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to national development objectives, and, specifically, the Sustainable Development Goals. That in turn would depend on effective governance generally, as well as the relationship among the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government. Measures to combat corruption were an important element, calling for a broad approach to preventing, detecting and punishing corrupt practices at the social level, alongside targeted approaches to address the specific types of corruption that blocked the achievement of particular Goals.

The Committee agreed that transformative leadership, which involved motivating people to adopt higher standards through respect for individual contribution, intellectual stimulation, inspiration and moral influence, was essential for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1). A number of specific technical competencies would also need to be mastered by public servants, among them strategic foresight, analysis and problem-solving, sociocultural literacy and outcome assessment.

Taking the observations above into account, the Committee prepared a contribution to the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one was left behind. In its contribution, the Committee emphasized, inter alia, that the success of the 2030 Agenda would be critically influenced by the public institutions underpinning its implementation. The Committee also adopted a draft resolution and a draft decision for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council.

[6 May 2016]

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fifteenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2012/28 of 27 July 2012, 2013/23 of 24 July 2013, 2014/38 of 18 November 2014, 2015/28 of 22 July 2015 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and emphasizing the importance of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, of providing access to justice for all and of building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels as a goal in itself and as a precondition for achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and noting the references in the Action Agenda to effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, as well as to good governance, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, equal access to fair justice systems and measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/327 of 14 September 2015, by which the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of freedom, human rights, national sovereignty, good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms, and effective, accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enabling inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development,

Recalling also Sustainable Development Goal 13, the Paris Agreement on climate change[1] and the need to take urgent action to address climate change and its impacts, which will be critical for the realization of the Goals,

[1] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

Referring to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[2] which entered into force on 14 December 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/184, in which it recognized the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome the digital divide, and stressing that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 69/228 of 19 December 2014 on promoting and fostering the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the Committee's work to implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fifteenth session[3] and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on moving from commitments to results in transforming public institutions to facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, in accordance with the 2016 theme of the Council;

2. *Invites* the Committee to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of its work and to continue advising the Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and invites Member States to make the principle of leaving no one behind a core principle of public administration;

Role of public institutions

4. *Stresses* that an effective public administration is a fundamental condition for the successful implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

5. *Welcomes* the fact that many countries are in the process of identifying and updating policies, strategies, institutions and arrangements for spearheading and coordinating the implementation and progress review of the Sustainable Development Goals, looks forward to the exchange of lessons learned on this topic at the high-level political forum in July 2016, and notes that sectoral ministries, in

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 421466.
[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2016, Supplement No. 24* (E/2016/44).

developing and implementing policies in their respective areas, need to take into account the interrelationships inherent in the Goals;

6. *Stresses* that the 2030 Agenda gives renewed urgency to ensuring that public administrations are effective, efficient, inclusive, transparent, ethical, accountable and centred on responding to the needs of all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable and those living in conflict and post-conflict situations and other countries in special situations;

Integrated policies for the Sustainable Development Goals

7. *Encourages* Governments to develop institutional arrangements and mechanisms for supporting the development and implementation of coherent and integrated policies for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that this also requires sustained leadership and that cooperation, consultation, engagement, dialogue and partnership be made the modus operandi of public administrations and public servants;

8. *Notes* the importance of a clear framework for allocating responsibilities related to the Sustainable Development Goals and establishing the working relationships between the national and subnational levels of government;

9. *Underscores* the fact that local governments have a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, given their proximity to the population and at the grassroots level, their role in delivering basic public services and their ability to take integrated approaches, bearing in mind that Goal 11 is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

10. *Stresses* that the responsibilities of local governments for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be supported by adequate human and financial resources and capacities;

11. *Recommends* that national and local governments, in their first steps to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, identify implementation priorities, targets and institutional arrangements and, inter alia, determine who is at risk of being left behind, drawing on broad consultations and engagement with civil society, with particular consideration given to necessary institutional reforms, as well as adjustments to policies, capacities and resources;

12. *Calls for* innovative efforts to build the capacities of public institutions for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as coherent policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, evidence-based review of progress and the collection and use of statistics and data;

13. *Calls upon* Governments and other relevant actors to sustain the promotion of creativity, innovation and excellence in public administration, inter alia by transforming administrative structures, processes, legislation and regulations based on information and communications technology and the Internet;

Participatory decision-making and inclusive service delivery

14. *Encourages* Governments to develop an open government system as a model of governance that focuses on citizens and establishes a new relationship between public administration and society;

15. *Recognizes* that the policies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be evidence-based, developed in a participatory, inclusive and collaborative fashion and focused on achieving results;

16. *Notes* that realizing the Sustainable Development Goals will require major efforts and investments to raise awareness about the Goals through education, communication, interaction, advocacy and capacity-building to build ownership of the Goals and create a culture of inclusive engagement and shared responsibility;

17. *Underscores* the fact that providing access to information, fostering open government and promoting citizen engagement are essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and urges Governments to take measures to promote, inter alia, open meetings and open records laws, effective oversight bodies, an active civil society, freedom of expression, plurality of information and the independence of the media;

18. *Recognizes* the transformative power of information and communications technology while noting that many forms of digital divide remain, and stresses that approaches to the delivery of public services for sustainable development must be multidimensional in order to reach the poorest and most vulnerable;

19. *Also recognizes* the value of the United Nations E-Government Survey as a tool in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

20. *Encourages* Governments pursuing open government initiatives to conduct an independent evaluation of the impact of such initiatives on the quality of public services and on the strengthening of transparency, accountability and social inclusion, with a view to enhancing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

Diversity and non-discrimination

21. *Expects* that the promotion of inclusion and diversity as a positive force, together with global values related to mutual respect among people of all backgrounds and views, will drive the long-term democratic and societal change necessary for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and advises that efforts in this regard need to focus both on society at large and on public servants;

22. *Recognizes* that, within public institutions, a balance must be found between the concern for integrating people who have been discriminated against, on the one hand, and the concerns for giving equal chances to all and ensuring the efficient functioning of institutions, on the other hand;

23. *Notes* that ensuring inclusiveness by and within public administration requires committed and inclusive leadership and a holistic, coherent and integrated vision in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, which may include the establishment of institutional and legislative diversity frameworks and mechanisms at all levels;

24. *Calls upon* Governments to proactively pursue policies to ensure that public services and public action improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable and those who are discriminated against;

25. *Also calls upon* Governments to develop innovative approaches, including community-driven development, to ensure that public services fully benefit the poorest and most vulnerable, inter alia through the establishment of policy impact assessments, institutional and legislative frameworks and mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind, as well as partnering with communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

26. *Suggests* that Governments consider measures to understand and address the factors driving discrimination and exclusion in public institutions, including possibly by conducting audits of the cultural and organizational behaviours of a given institution;

Oversight and accountability in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

27. *Recognizes* that corruption will undermine the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and stresses that combating corruption at all levels requires a broad approach to preventing, detecting and punishing corrupt practices at the social level and targeted approaches to address the specific types of corruption that block the achievement of particular Goals;

28. *Encourages* open access to government data and information, especially audit reports, allowing citizens to hold State institutions accountable for the use of resources entrusted to them and for their performance in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals;

29. *Notes* that a transparent election process at both the national and local levels is crucial for a committed, ethical and engaged leadership;

30. *Underscores* the fact that policies, programmes and actions for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should be designed and monitored in a participatory and transparent manner with a built-in concern for accountability;

Public servants and the Sustainable Development Goals

31. *Considers* that successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals depends on a merit-based civil service, which helps promote public ethics and ensures effective and fair human resources management;

32. *Calls upon* Governments to ensure that public institutions include civil servants from all segments of the population, that civil servants receive effective training and that they are subject to fair and merit-based employment decisions;

Follow-up

33. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, educational and research institutions, schools of public administration and other organizations to collaborate in raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, which may involve the organization of various activities, including meetings and symposiums;

34. *Requests* the Committee, at its sixteenth session, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of that session of the Council, to be held from 24 to 28 April 2017;

35. *Invites* the Committee to contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Sustainable Development Goals and the specific targets under Goals 16 and 17;

36. *Also invites* the Committee to continue advising on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements being established to promote implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific context and situation of countries differ widely;

37. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity development needs of Member States for building effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

38. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

39. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.

B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

2. Bearing in mind that the themes of the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council and of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development are expected to be decided later in 2016, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Council review and adopt the following draft decision:

Provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Economic and Social Council:

Decides that the overall theme of the sixteenth session of the Committee will be "Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: leadership, action and means";

Approves the provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Committee as set out below:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through leadership, action and means:
   (a) Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
   (b) Institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Institutional arrangements for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Development of principles of effective governance;

(e) Strategies for integrated action to achieve poverty eradication: implications for public institutions.

8. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Committee.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session.

C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on challenges for institutions in leaving no one behind

3. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to its contribution to the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind. In its contribution, conveyed to the President of the Council as Chair of the high-level political forum on 2 May 2016, the Committee underlined, inter alia, that the success of the 2030 Agenda would be critically influenced by the public institutions underpinning its implementation. Public institutions and Governments would have a particularly important role in ensuring that no one was left behind. That principle, which was a core principle of the 2030 Agenda, shed new light on the importance of overcoming certain challenges that public administration had long faced and the urgency of realizing the social equity principle of public administration. Innovative ways also have to be found to ensure that the concern to leave no one behind pervaded all public policies and public institutions. The contribution of the Committee identified possible elements to make that happen.

4. The Committee stressed that the principle of leaving no one behind should cut across all ministries and agencies. For that to happen, the highest level of government had to be committed to the principle and drive implementation.

5. Leaving no one behind should be embedded in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda from the outset. Countries should identify those who were at risk of being left behind by means of consultation with all levels of government, national, regional and local, and civil society, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. They needed to engage those groups in order to identify their needs and find ways to address them.

6. Institutions should proactively reach out to the poorest and most vulnerable to engage them in shaping policies and in designing, monitoring and assessing programmes that responded to their needs. Public institutions at the local and national levels needed to be fully representative of different segments of the population. Community-driven development must be encouraged and institutionalized where most appropriate and relevant.

7. Member States should be encouraged to ensure that their national and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate, supported the realization of the national targets that they had identified on the basis of global goals and the principle of leaving no one behind. Public service should be easily accessible and of equal quality for all people.

8. National strategies and plans and sectoral policies needed to proactively address the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; ensuring full and productive employment, particularly youth employment, and decent work for all; making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; reducing inequality within and between countries; and combating climate change were all critical to ensuring that no one was left behind.

9. Local authorities had a particular role in ensuring that no one was left behind. However, responsibilities should be matched by adequate resources, capacities and level of authority.

10. Governments, parliaments and the judiciary should enhance efforts to ensure that public administrations were held accountable for the impact of their work, including on the poorest and most vulnerable. Accountability mechanisms needed to be inclusive and to ensure the participation of all segments of the population in order to ensure an inclusive culture.

11. Particularly urgent was the need to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data. Information and communications technology had proven to be a valuable enabler in that regard.

12. Building the capacities of public institutions at all levels was critical for realizing all the Sustainable Development Goals. International support, including through sustained contributions to official development assistance was therefore important for the implementation of the Goals. Particular attention to international cooperation was also encouraged with respect to cross-border issues.

13. No country should be left behind and special attention must be given to the acute challenges that public institutions faced in countries in special situations such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and countries in post-conflict situations.

14. Large inflows of migrants and refugees posed unprecedented challenges and put severe strains on public institutions. Global and regional sharing of responsibilities and support should therefore be strengthened.

15. Action taken to leave no one behind should form an integral part of the national and thematic reviews of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be conducted at the high-level political forum.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

16. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its fifteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 18 to 22 April 2016. At the time of the session, there was one vacant position to be filled on the Committee.

17. The Acting Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Marion Barthélemy, called the session to order and welcomed the participants. The Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Sven Jürgenson, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, made opening remarks. The Committee considered all items on the agenda of the fifteenth session and concluded by adopting the draft report.

B. Attendance

18. The following 21 Committee members attended the session: Giuseppe Maria Armenia (Italy), Türksel Kaya Bensghir (Turkey), Rowena G. Bethel (Bahamas), José Castelazo (Mexico), Meredith Edwards (Australia), Walter Fust (Switzerland), Angelita Gregorio-Medel (Philippines), Igor Khalevinskiy (Russian Federation), Mushtaq Khan (Bangladesh), Francisco Longo Martínez (Spain), Palouki Massina (Togo), Alexandre Navarro Garcia (Brazil), Paul Oquist (Nicaragua), Marta Oyhanarte (Argentina), Eko Prasojo (Indonesia), Odette R. Ramsingh (South Africa), Allan Rosenbaum (United States of America), Margaret Saner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Dona Scola (Republic of Moldova), Pontso Suzan Matumelo Sekatle (Lesotho) and Najat Zarrouk (Morocco).

19. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the session: Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Regional Commissions New York Office, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, International Labour Office, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

20. Observers from governmental, non-governmental and related organizations also attended. Observers were invited to provide written statements in advance of the session. A total of 14 statements were received, which served to inform the Committee in its work. The list of observers who attended the fifteenth session can be viewed on the website of the Committee at https://publicadministration.un.org/en/cepa.

C. Agenda

21. The agenda of the fifteenth session of the Committee was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Moving from commitments to results: transforming public institutions to facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals:
   (a) Ensuring prioritization and decision-making that is fair, responsive, inclusive, participatory and accountable at all levels;
   (b) Improving engagement and communication between Governments and stakeholders, including through access to information, open government and electronic and mobile solutions;
   (c) Ensuring effective and innovative implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation of the policies identified in support of the Sustainable Development Goals;
   (d) Strengthening the confidence of citizens in the effectiveness, validity and integrity of public administration through enhanced, targeted efforts to use good governance to prevent, expose and deal with corruption;
   (e) Developing transformative leadership and enhancing relevant competencies of public servants.
4. Provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Committee.
6. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifteenth session.

D. Election of officers

22. The following members served as officers of the Committee during the fifteenth session:

Chair:
José Castelazo (Mexico)

Vice-Chairs:
Allan Rosenbaum (United States)
Margaret Saner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Najat Zarrouk (Morocco)

Rapporteur:
Dona Scola (Republic of Moldova)

Chapter III

Ensuring effective and integrated action in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national and local levels

23. The Committee noted that the scale of the challenge faced by all countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda was enormous. Given the pivotal role of Governments when it came to implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels were a sine qua non for making progress. Implementing the Goals also required effective leadership, and leadership at a high political level was a decisive factor.

24. Alongside Governments, the active engagement of parliaments and other legislative organs, national and local authorities, civil society, the private sector and all people was critical. However, it was not self-evident that all national Governments and public institutions were ready and equipped to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. A transition phase might be necessary for institutions in some countries to adapt to and make progressive changes. Particular attention should be given to countries in special situations, such as post-conflict and post-disaster countries, the least developed countries and small island developing States.

25. Education and learning were at the heart of realizing the societal changes required by the Sustainable Development Goals. Awareness of the Goals should be incorporated in the educational curriculum as an investment in the leaders of tomorrow. Communication and awareness-raising were also critical and would increase the quality of interaction between citizens and institutions.

26. Monitoring and evaluation could lead to accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to a greater sense of ownership. There was a need to ensure the continuity and ongoing improvement of policies through engaging transformation leaders and change agents, effective institutions and institutional partnership.

A. Integrated policies for the Sustainable Development Goals

27. The Committee underscored that policy integration was important for the realization of the 2030 Agenda, given the many interdependencies among the Sustainable Development Goals. Policies should be coherent both horizontally across sectors and vertically across levels of government. However, in policy integration one must be mindful of the impact of various institutional constraints such as disjointed or overly hierarchical structures and governmental processes which did not necessarily support interaction and collaboration.

28. Policy integration went beyond coordination. Policy integration required going beyond separate, sectoral policymaking and warranted action based on horizontal and vertical interconnections. There was a need for policymaking processes that were evidence-based, data-driven, results-focused and collaborative and that ensured effectiveness and consistency of action. It was important to take an inclusive and participatory approach to problem-solving, decision-making and resource allocation, which had implications for the way public administrations and public servants worked.

29. The Committee noted that global policy coherence, or lack thereof, could have a profound effect on development. For example, there might be priorities in the areas of trade, finance, production and consumption that competed or conflicted with efforts to promote poverty eradication, protect the environment and reduce climate change. Coherence between action on climate change and action on the other Sustainable Development Goals was critical. What could and should be done to transform institutions and promote policy coherence with a view to the implementation of the Goals must be seen in context.

30. There was no single approach to policy integration. Governments needed to pursue a targeted approach that took into account the institutional and development context and inspired trust.

31. Leadership was also important for ensuring that policies were integrated. One way to exercise leadership was to develop or use a national plan and to organize vertical and horizontal cohesion in government action related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Multi-stakeholder approaches should be strengthened, given that they were emphasized in the 2030 Agenda.

32. The Committee stressed that, in order to leave no one behind, the local level must be engaged, which suggested the need for decentralization. There was no golden rule for the degree of decentralization, nor was there a template. Decentralization efforts must be context specific, with different models adapted as appropriate in order to enable local authorities to perform their functions effectively. Priorities needed to be defined by local authorities in a collaborative manner, in consultation with all stakeholders and society at large.

33. Local authorities played a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, given their proximity to citizens and ability to grasp the needs of people on the ground. Local authorities were often more able to take a holistic approach to development issues, owing to their more flexible structure. Given the vital role of local authorities in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, countries should enhance vertical policy integration between government levels and develop more robust national frameworks to improve working relationships across all levels.

34. In transforming institutions with a view to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, it might be important to develop road maps for implementation and to review work processes, procedures and laws. That was necessary to open pathways for change and new ways of delivering services, as well as to provide administrations at the national and subnational levels with adequate power to deliver on their mandates using both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

35. It was a significant challenge to manage mechanisms to engage with civil society, listen carefully to people and give them opportunities to contribute to policymaking and decision-making processes, including through social media and other platforms. Further thought was necessary on the various institutional arrangements for the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals and on the kind of institutional transformation that was needed, beyond restructuring. It was also important to document what had worked and could serve as an example for others to consider.

36. Steps to strengthen vertical policy integration and reform national-local relations should entail: (a) reviewing the state of relations and reforms within

countries; (b) supporting national and local authorities in assuming new functions in support of the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) assessing and identifying the subnational Sustainable Development Goal deficits and using them to develop local capacities and actions to implement the Goals; (d) improving national and subnational accountability mechanisms and funding incentives; and (e) developing clear commitment and leadership at the national and the local levels to steer policy integration for the Goals. Finally, equally important was the role of international and regional partners in delivering capacity-building and development aid.

37. There must be a willingness to promote true capacity-building at the local level and for national and local authorities to agree to a balance of power. That might result in a loss of power for some, and possibly a loss of control over certain resources, in order to ensure that others had the means to fulfil their responsibilities, which might also require an enhanced ability to mobilize resources.

38. The Committee reiterated that there was no single approach to policy integration, since each country was different. Given that reality, institutional arrangements would depend greatly on the national and subnational contexts. Further thinking was needed about the various factors at play and the place of knowledge-sharing, together with a clarification of the roles of different stakeholders in moving forward with the 2030 Agenda.

B. Participatory decision-making and inclusive service delivery

39. The Committee noted that, in pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals, for many countries there was a need for a paradigm shift in government towards advancing a balanced approach, improving engagement and communication with the people and enhancing the responsiveness of institutions. Public space, which comprised the public interest, public value and the public sphere, was at the nucleus of all action to implement the 2030 Agenda. Building a sense of shared responsibility in the public space was important. Sustainable development required in-depth transformation within the public space involving all stakeholders.

40. In many cases, it might be necessary to shift to an arrangement in which government and civil society were joined or networked in an effective and binding relationship, with shared responsibilities. The Sustainable Development Goals called for high levels of communication and engagement among stakeholders. A comprehensive understanding of needs, priorities and capacities was required in taking stock of what that would entail and to strengthen efforts to ensure that no one was left behind.

41. The Committee underlined that, while open government had been gaining ground, the movement was still in its initial stages and there was a need for clearer evidence of its connection to the achievement of development goals. The main objective of open government should be to improve governance and move from a State-centric model of governance to one that focused on citizens and established a new relationship between public administration and society, including by fostering transparent, participatory decision-making processes and promoting knowledge economies.

42. Political will and civic participation were two primary factors in open government success. Without them, open government was difficult to implement

and sustain over time. Strong and long-lasting partnerships between government and civil society were vital to successful open government initiatives.

43. The Committee recalled that information and communications technology could be an enabler of policy formulation and integration, particularly in supporting a whole-of-government approach in the public sector. It facilitated access to public information and services to the public, including the poor and other vulnerable groups. It could also help in building trust in government by enhancing transparency and the accountability of public administration through such tools as social media, crowdsourcing and mobile government. Such technology might also offer a means for the private sector and civil society to be part of the co-creation of public value and production of services in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. There had been notable shifts in some countries towards "digital government" and "smart cities", involving, for example, the use of open data and big data for predictive policy analysis, as well as enhanced efforts to link different sectors.

44. The Committee observed that there was a need for a national strategic approach to the use of e-government in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets. E-government should also have a role in fostering the knowledge economy and the digital economy. The *United Nations E-Government Survey*, covering all countries, was seen as an example of an instrument that could be used to promote the use of information and communication technology for such purposes. However, limitations remained and challenges related to readiness, privacy and cybersecurity were continuing concerns. Access to information and communication technologies and the Internet, as well as the capacity to take full advantage of them, were still limited in some countries and among vulnerable groups.

45. It was important to increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda. However, data needed to be open and available in understandable and usable formats. Empowering people by means of free access to legal information and digitizing legal texts could result in positive development impacts in many countries.

C. Diversity and non-discrimination

46. The Committee agreed that diversity, non-discrimination and inclusion were global concerns that were central to the participatory and inclusive process of sustainable development. They were complex and multifaceted issues directly connected to the aims of the 2030 Agenda. When properly managed and integrated, diversity and action against all forms of discrimination could play an important part in positioning the public sector as a true driver of change, development and performance. Promotion of diversity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness and respect as global values, including through capacity-building and investment in public education, would therefore drive long-term democratic and societal change for the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. Diversity and non-discrimination were characterized and affected immensely by global development. Given the complexity of the issues surrounding diversity and non-discrimination, including cultural issues, it was essential to ensure that diversity and non-discrimination were understood as assets and not threats, and as sources of renewal for public policies in service to development, social cohesion

and peace. International and regional frameworks, as well as domestic legislation, would affect how public administration approached diversity and non-discrimination.

48. The Committee stressed that, in increasingly multicultural and pluralistic societies, public administration needed to increase efforts to manage diversity and non-discrimination effectively and to promote an inclusive workplace culture. Challenges arose from a variety of factors, including political, socioeconomic, demographic, cultural, managerial, financial, technological, historical and environmental. Managing diversity and non-discrimination and promoting an inclusive culture within public administration required committed leadership, together with the establishment of institutional and legislative diversity frameworks, mechanisms, resources and tools.

49. One way to understand existing attitudes and potential values was through an institutional cultural audit. In promoting diversity and non-discrimination, careful consideration should be given both to visible differences among people and to invisible differences. That was important, as cultural or hidden beliefs that influenced individual behaviour and perceptions often resulted in unconscious bias that could lead to unconscious discrimination, particularly in recruitment and the workplace culture. While designing diversity management programmes, it was important to consider carefully how to implement different models and principles so as to avoid unintended negative consequences. Learning from past lessons was important in that regard.

50. The Committee agreed that diversity, non-discrimination and inclusion, along with respect and tolerance, should be placed at the heart of institutional reforms. The issues must be dealt with in their entirety, with a balanced and comprehensive approach, rather than through piecemeal measures. Efforts to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups and fairness in employment decisions in the public service were essential to ensure representativeness of the population which public servants served. Such efforts also provided a larger pool of candidates for public service and were valuable in enhancing capability, productivity and organizational performance. Public administration could thus act as a change agent by embracing the richness of diversity and strengthening intercultural institutional competence.

51. The Committee noted that community-driven development was also critical to the implementation and review of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. A holistic, integrated and sustainable process was needed to support community-driven development and social equity. Embracing community-driven development called for the effective implementation of access to public information, among other measures.

52. In promoting diversity, non-discrimination, inclusion and community-driven development, it was essential that vulnerable groups not be overlooked. Particular attention might be needed to the situation of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. Engaging youth in public policy processes was also important. Efforts by institutions to integrate migrants and youth into society, including through the provision of public services and employment opportunities, among other actions, was crucial to ensuring inclusiveness and leaving no one behind.

D. Oversight and accountability in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

53. In realizing the 2030 Agenda, accountability mechanisms should be independent and engage all relevant stakeholders, including civil society. The Committee underlined that parliament was the principal oversight institution in modern democracies, with authority both over public policies and over government administration. It had fundamental responsibility for budgetary control and the allocation of funds and for ensuring that government departments, agencies and other public bodies delivered on their mandates. The complexities of governance in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals only increased the need to enhance the capacity of parliaments to perform their policymaking and oversight roles.

54. The judiciary was another critical mechanism for oversight. The judiciary could legitimize government policies, legislation and actions and annul such policies and actions if they were found to be inconsistent with the constitution and other laws. The effectiveness and professionalism of the judiciary depended on effective governance generally, as well as the relationship among the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government.

55. With regard to oversight of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, political ownership of a national vision and national development strategy was paramount. Leadership and support were needed at the highest level and could take the form of an institutionalized mechanism for the coordination for national efforts. Such a high-level forum should be broad-based and engage all relevant stakeholders, including the authorities responsible for implementation.

56. Governments should play a leading role in engaging non-State actors through a multi-stakeholder approach. The influence of the private sector, civil society and the media had been expanding considerably as a result of the changing role of the State, societal developments and the evolution of technology. An important role of civil society was to act as a watchdog for people's rights, including the rights of vulnerable groups, and to exert pressure on government for better public services. That required a sustained and rigorous process of capacity-building and sensitization of various stakeholder groups. Civil society also played a part in reaching diverse communities including those in rural areas and the poorest people.

57. The Committee agreed that it was important to think beyond innovation as a normative objective and to consider how to encourage social innovation and facilitate space for experimentation and risk-taking while maintaining a robust accountability mechanism. Innovation and risk management were closely interconnected. A strategic and pragmatic approach to promoting innovation in the public sector was needed. It was also important to allow flexibility, build the collaborative capacities of public administrations and consider ways to sustain innovative practices.

58. In a networked society, innovative means of gathering feedback should be explored, for example through the use of big data and machine-to-machine systems, in order to better understand the concerns of people and restore trust in public policy processes. Open government could enhance public access to information and services and hence strengthen oversight by people. For open government to be

effective, however, behavioural changes, in addition to technological capacity, were needed on the part of both public administration and the public at large.

59. Evaluation and oversight of public policies are ways of strengthening accountability for government action, as well as means of improving the outcome and impact of efforts to promote implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through the objective assessment of public policies against agreed priorities, indicators and timelines.

60. Supreme audit institutions, which must be independent, could help review implementation. A precondition for review was the existence of public accounting systems that gave an accurate view of public resources and spending against predefined targets, including liquidity, assets and liabilities. Two related indicators proposed by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions pertaining to the implementation of target 16.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, should be given further consideration: the percentage of supreme audit institutions meeting the criteria for independence as set out in the Mexico Declaration on Supreme Audit Institution Independence[4] and the percentage of national Governments applying improved public accounting systems.

61. The Committee agreed that political will was critical to anti-corruption efforts, as was enhancement of the capacity of governmental and civil society watchdogs and anti-corruption agencies. Corruption prevention could also be substantially strengthened with the active involvement of civil society, the media, the judiciary and local authorities. Anti-corruption action required independent and capable oversight mechanisms, such as anti-corruption agencies, detection and punishment of corrupt practices and public availability of audit results.

62. The effectiveness of State mechanisms in controlling corruption was enhanced when combined with increased access to public information, including financial and budgetary information, openness in public discourse, access to open government data and improved data collection. By way of illustration, an online platform for public procurement could facilitate open tendering, public review and monitoring of contracts. Disclosure of assets of officials, deputies and family members should also be subject to independent review and be open to public scrutiny.

63. The Committee agreed that a rules-based, professional, efficient, transparent, accountable and responsive public service that encompassed effective stakeholder engagement was critical in combating corruption. Measures were needed to strengthen transparency and promote collaboration among parliamentarians, public administrators and civil society in order to build public trust and to ensure the implementation of standards. An adequate level of remuneration for public servants, together with education and training, could counter corruption. The importance of public awareness and capacity development, particularly among public servants and youth, was also noted. In some countries, even simple improvements in governance and accountability, for example in carefully selected performance indicators, could reduce opportunities for corruption.

64. Countering corruption required cooperation and information sharing among Member States. One such mechanism would entail establishing national registries of beneficial ownership of corporations and monetary and physical assets held by

[4] Available from www.intosai.org/issai-executive-summaries/view/article/issai-10-the-mexico-declaration-on-sai-independence-eger.html.

corporate entities, with information exchange among corruption prevention agencies. The Implementation Review Group of the United Nations Convention against Corruption also served as an effective global mechanism for promoting anti-corruption measures and as a catalyst to bring about technical assistance and collaboration among countries, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation.

65. The Committee stressed that tackling corruption called for a broad approach to detecting and punishing corrupt practices, together with targeted approaches to address the specific types of corruption that blocked the achievement of particular Sustainable Development Goals. That required priority sectors and related corruption vulnerabilities to be identified, non-State actors to be involved in corruption prevention measures, and the institutional context and political economy in which corrupt practices occur to be taken into account.

E. Public servants and the Sustainable Development Goals

66. The Committee agreed that transformative leadership, which involved a commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, motivating people to adopt higher standards through respect for individual contributions, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, creation of a shared vision and moral influence, was essential for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Practices of exemplary leadership included the sharing of an inspiring vision, creating a road map, challenging the status quo and encouraging people to act. Creating an atmosphere of trust and celebrating accomplishments made people feel appreciated for their efforts.

67. Transformative leaders anticipated future challenges and could envision a way to realize objectives with political buy-in and in partnership with other actors. That applied to the Sustainable Development Goals, which called for continued and sustained efforts over the long term. In realizing the Goals, public servants were driving long-term strategic foresights. When complex politics and governance intersected with the Goals, their role increased in importance, in particular when there was a redistribution of functions and resources among national Governments, local authorities and other non-governmental actors.

68. The Committee reiterated that evidence-based policymaking was a function of good governance. Public policies were most likely to enjoy widespread support if they had their basis in the actual conditions in society, derived from data and evidence, reflected the aspirations of those affected and drew on engagement and knowledge. A number of specific technical competencies would need to be mastered by public servants, among them strategic foresight, analysis and problem-solving, sociocultural literacy and outcome assessment.

69. One of the main requirements for the success of a transformational sustainable development agenda was a merit-based public service supported by ongoing capacity-building programmes and education adapted to the changing environment.

70. Cooperation between Governments at the regional and global levels can contribute to the exchange of knowledge and sharing of good practices and lead to more successful sustainable development policies.

Chapter IV
Future work of the Committee

71. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration would continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Economic and Social Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the deliberations of the Council and assisting it in the performance of its functions.

72. At its sixteenth session, the Committee would work on the theme that the Council adopted for its 2017 session, and prepare policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of that issue. The Committee opted to base its contribution on ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through leadership, action and means.

73. The Committee agreed that in-depth consideration was needed of particular aspects of such a broad institutional challenge. It decided to focus on supporting local authorities and communities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals, institutional arrangements for the Goals and the implications for public institutions of strategies for integrated action to achieve poverty eradication. The Committee would also contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

74. The Committee also decided to draft, with the assistance of the Secretariat, a set of principles of responsible and effective governance to inform the study of more specific issues that cohered with the Sustainable Development Goals and the priorities of the Economic and Social Council and to serve as a normative baseline for future policy and practice, and possibly inform a global research agenda for public administration and development. The principles were expected to be few in number, expressed in non-technical language and relatively easy for non-specialists to recall. The Committee stressed that such principles must be substantially consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

75. The Committee welcomed the review of the United Nations Public Service Awards being undertaken by the Secretariat with the aim of enhancing efforts to promote innovation and excellence in public service for sustainable development and of aligning future Award processes with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee expressed strong support for the Awards and was of the view that the members should continue to be kept apprised of progress on the review and should be engaged in the future evaluation of applications and selection of Award winners. The Committee also encouraged the Secretariat to revise procedures and guidelines to ensure that the Award was known in every country and that equality of opportunity was ensured for applicants by, inter alia, taking different levels of economic and social development into account in the revision of Award categories.

Annex

List of documents

Agenda item	*Title or description*
2	Provisional annotated agenda (E/C.16/2016/1)
3	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2016/2)
3 (a)	Conference room paper on the principles of and mechanisms for sharing responsibilities and resources between national and local governments
3	Background note on the challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
3	Background note on the possible development of a set of internationally recognized principles of governance by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration
3 (a)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on diversity and non-discrimination in public administration: strategic levers for sustainable development (E/C.16/2016/3)
3 (a)	Conference room paper on the promotion of diversity in employment and an inclusive workplace culture
3 (b)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on institutional capacity for the administration of public space in sustainable development: interaction between government and society (E/C.16/2016/4)
3 (b)	Conference room paper on improving engagement and communication between government and stakeholders through online and mobile solutions
3 (b)	Conference room paper on evaluation of open government performance and results
3 (c)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on oversight institutions, mechanisms and standards of government administration (E/C.16/2016/5)
3 (c)	Conference room paper on promoting innovation and learning in the course of policy implementation
3 (d)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on enhancing efforts to use good governance to prevent, expose and deal with corruption: two essential measures (E/C.16/2016/6)

Agenda item	*Title or description*
3 (d)	Conference room paper on public and parliamentary oversight of State bodies in the fight against corruption
3 (d)	Conference room paper on addressing the normalization of corruption in public institutions
3 (e)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on developing transformative leadership and enhancing relevant competencies of public servants (E/C.16/2016/7)

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